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AN APPEAL FOR THE PRESERVATION OF WORKS OF ART IN EUROPE

THE National Sculpture Society, at a meeting held in New York, on January 12th, drew up and unanimously adopted an appeal to the European belligerents for the preservation of works of Art. So fine was the spirit of this appeal that the American Federation of Arts felt that it should be made National, and therefore on the 27th of January, sent it out for endorsement to its 200 chapters scattered throughout the United States.

The National Sculpture Society is an organization composed of members of both foreign and American birth, whose views concerning the present conflict are widely divergent, yet not one saw in this appeal any breach of neutrality, but rather indeed a recognition of common kinship and common heritage in Art, which is in fact both a universal language and possession.

The text of this appeal as sent out by the American Federation of Arts is as follows:

TO THE EUROPEAN BELLIGERENTS:

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS, of the United States of America, a National organization whose membership includes men and women of American and European birth, united by a common aim to cherish art in this country, hereby makes an earnest petition to all those now engaged in warfare, whether offensive or defensive; and prays that they may respect and spare the world's works of art, wherever found.

Man's pictures, sculptures, temples and libraries are his monuments to the soul and its aspiration, and hence belong not only to the races that create them and the places that enshrine them, but to the whole world. They are held in trust, as an inheritance. Whether such memorials of the spirit are in France or in Germany, in Belgium or in Britain, in Austria or in Asia, the destruction of them shames the destroyer, and makes all peoples poorer.

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS does not portion blame or praise for acts of war, when it states a fact which the best, on both sides, acknowledge with sorrow, namely, that in the first five months of the present European War, sacred monuments of art and science have been irreparably injured. Shrines that five months ago were living messages of art are now nothing but mournful memoirs in archaeology. Looking toward the future rather than the past, the Federation asks, "Shall warring people continue such destruction as this they already deplore, and thus increase the weight of disgrace that already lies heavy upon our twentieth century civilization?"

Perhaps Europe herself has scarcely understood the pricelessness of her own monuments. She grew up with them, she became used to them. Great architecture and great sculpture were her inherited commonplaces of daily life, before ever Columbus set sail for our newer world. But the eyes of American artists are neither seared by war nor sated by custom. In our younger land, whose whole national artistic life cannot yet be counted by centuries, our artists know from pioneer experience that it is a difficult matter to produce a nation's masterpieces, and therefore they feel the more keenly that it is a crime to destroy them.

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS is gratefully aware of the debt our country owes to Europe for her help and sympathy in our effort to build here on our own soil a worthy national art. Will not Europe now further extend this obligation, by showing us an example—heroic, perhaps, at the present hour—an example of that spirit of reverence in which all that is best in art is created and conserved? This our prayer springs from a hope and a good wish for all mankind.